
BOOK REVIEWS

Edgehill. The Battle Reinterpreted. CL Scott, A Turton, EE Gruber von Arni. Pen and Sword 2004. £25.00 Pp 224 + xiii. Illus. ISBN No. 1-84415-133-6.

Edgehill has held somewhat of a fascination for this reviewer, being born not many miles away, but a closer study of the battle has always been 'on the cards'.

Having read several books on the English Civil War, including Brigadier Peter Young's *Edgehill 1642* and Phillip Tennant's *Edgehill and Beyond*, what initially attracted me to this book was the subtitle and the fact that it included what most authors pay scant attention to, detailed treatment of the wounded.

The book did not disappoint me, but is perhaps not for the casual reader on English Civil War history. It is as its sub-title states, a re-interpretation and re-evaluation of the battle. This could not have been done without the in depth knowledge that the three authors possess.

The various chapters of the book prepare the reader by detailing the armies involved, the land, and how both armies came to be in the area. The battle itself is dissected into various segments, such as opening moves, the North, South and centre of the battlefield and finally the disengagement. It is the chapter 'Aftermath' which will be of most interest to readers of this Journal because it is an in depth study of the treatment of the casualties and who better to contribute this than Eric Gruber von Arni. We are informed that it was the local villagers who initially provided care to the wounded. Illustrated by copies of receipts for these services the chapter goes on to detail the secondary care provided in the hospitals in London and private houses in Warwick and Coventry. Parliamentary records were better kept than Royalist forces but the authors have managed to include some very interesting tables. If not already done so, readers are encouraged to read Gruber von Arni's *Justice to the Maimed Soldier* for a more in depth study of health care during the bitter years of the Civil Wars.

A very useful concluding chapter is entitled *Edgehill Today* and is a guide to touring the battlefield.

The book has extensive photographs, maps and diagrams and some fine pen and ink illustrations on many of the pages.

It is a magnificent book which I am sure will take its place next to that of Young as a scholarly work on the battle.

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The Conscript Doctors, Memories of National Service. Dr JSG Blair Ed. The Pentland Press Ltd 2001. Pp 205 + xviii. £14.95 plus P&P from the Author. ISBN No. 1-85821-946-9.

To some National Service was two years taken out of their life, something that they either hated or enjoyed. The RAMC was no different to any other regiment or corps except for the large influx of professionally qualified members of the medical profession who swelled its ranks. Many RAMC National Servicemen would rather forget those two years, but there are some who have compiled their memoirs of this period and some of these rest within the AMS Museum Archives.

With the help of the Wellcome Trust and the British Medical Association, Dr Blair has compiled reminiscences from over 200 National Service Doctors and some of those are to be found in this book. The experiences have been grouped together geographically in chapters such as *The Home Base*, *Around the Mediterranean*, *Africa*, to list a few. Some make interesting reading, but some read like a catalogue of contempt for the regular RAMC. Dr Blair has also let what are perhaps his own feelings on the regular RAMC creep into the text. On page 78 he states that *BATLS* was run in the main by TA 'medicals' because the regular RAMC did not have the experience at the end of the 20th century to do this. I am sure that this statement may be open to debate by serving RAMC Clinicians. On page 120 he makes the comment 'the all too usual bullying so characteristic of the British Army', referring to the national service period.

Throughout the book there are various references to General Drummond and one wonders if these would have perhaps been better left out.

There is no index in the book, which would have helped greatly, this point being made by National Services Medical Officers perusing the museum copy of the book. There are also no illustrations, another great pity. The museum itself holds a large selection of NS RAMC course photographs.

This book is perhaps of interest to those who contributed and to specialised libraries and historians rather than the casual reader.

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